

The co-chairs aim to make the walk family-friendly year after year, because suicide and mental health do not just impact adults. There has been an increase in pediatric mental health issues in recent years, and mental health affects the whole family. The co-chairs have included events for the whole family in the walk, from face painting and bracelet making to live music and therapy dogs.

Although the walk takes place on one day, Joni, Nicole, and their team begin preparing for the event months in advance. They start planning in January and meet often to organize sponsors, vendors, and volunteers. This year, the walk had 15 sponsors supporting the event. 80 percent of every dollar from sponsorships goes to suicide prevention and mental health research tight here in Iowa.

Joni and Nicole are tireless advocates for mental health, and their dedication to raising awareness in the community is remarkable. Joni has worked with the American Suicide Prevention Foundation for 12 years and Nicole has served the organization since 2015. Both women coordinate an amazing walk that provides a space for families of those lost to suicide to feel understood and to meet other families affected by suicide.

The American Suicide Prevention Foundation offers free resources for individuals and families across the region. The organization has monthly support groups, community-based presentations, and programs to help Iowans become more aware of mental health.

Joni and Nicole's advocacy for suicide prevention and mental health awareness have changed lives and provided hope for countless Iowans. It is my pleasure to honor Joni Thornton and Nicole Mortenson as Iowans of the Week.

HONORING NEWS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 8, 2021

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor NEWS, Napa County's only domestic violence and sexual abuse agency, as it celebrates its 40th anniversary.

Founded in 1981, NEWS was created by members of the Napa County community with the mission of providing a safe place for women and children who experienced domestic abuse. With the help of local Napa County leaders, NEWS founders were able to acquire a house, and begin to shelter survivors of domestic abuse when they had nowhere else to go. Since 1981, NEWS has grown into an organization that serves over 1,300 Women, Men, Children, and LGBTQ+ folk annually.

The critical services NEWS provides to the Napa community include a 24-hour domestic violence and sexual abuse help line, referral services for domestic violence and sexual abuse survivors, and food, clothing, transportation, and medical support. Additionally, the NEWS shelter provides private bedrooms, private bathrooms, a family room, a full kitchen, and spacious areas for children to play for up to 20 community members at a time. Further, the NEWS court advocates assist survivors in filing protective orders, and NEWS case managers work with clients to find safe and affordable housing.

NEWS is an active member of several local, state, and national organizations that advocate for and promote domestic violence and sexual abuse prevention. These organizations include the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, the Child Abuse Prevention Council, the Community Leaders Coalition, the Napa County Continuum of Care, the Napa County Behavioral Health Committee, the Napa Valley Communities Organized Against Disaster, and more.

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that NEWS' contributions to our community have made Napa County a safer place for survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse. It is therefore fitting and proper that we honor it here today.

RECOGNIZING JOHN BASALYGA, ITALIAN AMERICAN MAN OF THE YEAR

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 8, 2021

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor John Basalyga who will be recognized as the Italian American Man of the Year by the Columbus Day Association of Lackawanna County at their annual gathering on Sunday, October 10, 2021.

John was raised in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. When he began his career in 2001, he knew he wanted to maintain the deep connection he felt to his home region by creating jobs and supporting the local economy. He founded Eastern Roofing Systems in Jessup, Pennsylvania, which began as a small local business and eventually grew into one of the largest commercial and industrial roofing contractors in the country, known for a commitment to quality and innovation.

In 2006, John founded JBAS Realty and began turning industrial properties into housing, transforming spaces from the region's manufacturing past into modern accommodations. The Lofts at 300 Bowman in Dickson City, the Railroad Lofts in Moscow, the Warehouse Lofts in Scranton, and the North Valley Lofts in Olyphant are a testament to John's architectural and design vision and his commitment to providing housing in Lackawanna County. His company also takes on commercial properties. In 2015, John acquired the Mall at Steamtown, which he transformed into the Marketplace at Steamtown: a modern, mixed-use facility that attracts tourists and locals to downtown Scranton. Other properties that have benefitted from John's talent and expertise include Crunch Fitness; the Olde Brook Inn, a popular fine dining restaurant; Geisinger Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine, set to open later this year; and the Rock Creek Corporate Center and the Rock Creek Shops.

John is always working on new and innovative ventures that improve the landscape of our community. He recently founded Serenity Care, LLC, which will own and operate five senior care centers in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties. In his most ambitious move yet, he plans to demolish the Red Carpet Inn to construct the City of Scranton's tallest building, which will feature retail establishments, a restaurant, a hotel, office space, and residential units.

His success in commercial roofing led John to expand his business to include independent service and residential departments in 2019. Eastern Residential Solutions won an Angie's List Super Service Award in 2020 and is integral to John's charitable work. The company recently provided a new roof for a local veteran through the Beacon of Hope Project in 2020, and in 2021, they donated the labor and materials to replace all the roofs at South Scranton Little League.

I am honored to join with the Columbus Day Association of Lackawanna County in recognizing John as the Italian American Man of the Year. John's hard work, dedication, and vision have transformed the City of Scranton, and I wish him all the best as he continues to help our beloved city reach new heights.

RECOGNIZING JESSICA NEUWIRTH

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 8, 2021

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize my friend, Jessica Neuwirth, for her longstanding commitment to women's rights and her work against human trafficking around the world.

As one of America's preeminent lawyers and activists on women's rights and a graduate of Harvard Law School, Jessica has worked extensively in the international women's rights movement with the United Nations, in international criminal courts, and within the larger global women's movement. She served as Special Advisor on Sexual Violence to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, drafting the sections on sexual violence of the historic Akayesu judgement in 1998, which defined rape for the first time in international law and found sexual violence to constitute a form of genocide.

Jessica continued her important work in the international sphere, helping to organize a global Afghan Women's Summit just three months after 9/11 in December 2001, and a Beijing +10 campaign on laws which discriminate against women, resulting in the creation by the Human Rights Council of a UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women in Law and Practice. She played a key role in the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act in 2000, as well as the international Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, adopted by the United Nations in 2000. Jessica has also served as Special Advisor on Sexual Violence to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, where she continued to highlight the gruesome use of rape as a weapon in armed conflicts around the world. Today, as the Rita E. Hauser Director of the Human Rights Program at the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College, Jessica serves as an incubator for the Global Reparations Fund for Victims of Sexual Violence launched last year at the United Nations.

It is therefore no surprise that Jessica was honored this past week with the insignia of Knight of the French Legion of Honour. This is the highest award that a citizen or noncitizen of France can receive, and speaks volumes about the strong devotion, and enduring drive for justice that has characterized Jessica for her entire life.